St Andrews Cherry Hinton – Steeple Keeper's Report 2025

Firstly, I would like to thank Ian, Robert and Jo for their help and advice throughout the year for all bell maintenance related tasks.

Like last year, I am unaware of whether any stays have been broken, but I think we've been fortunate, as I can't remember any incidents! Ian may know.

As we did not experience a particularly hot Summer last year, the fittings did not seem to be as loose as they usually are when checked during a post-summer inspection. However, it may be a good idea to check again, post-winter.

Perhaps the most noteworthy steeple keeping activity has been rope adjustment. Robert, Jo and myself were involved in replacing the rope on the 2 (on 26/10/24), which had experienced some fraying on the tail. The new rope, initially very stiff, has been nicely broken in, but unfortunately has quite a thick tail, which makes ringing a little uncomfortable, especially for those of us with dainty hands. The old frayed rope was lovingly resurrected by Phil Gorman who charged a very reasonably £30 to make the following adjustments:

- Addition of a new flax tail (hand spliced)
- Sally rotated to even wear
- The PSP top was hand spliced and whipped with bees-waxed cotton

On the same day, the 3's sally was raised slightly to improve comfort. I am uncertain whether the rope on the 3 had also been replaced before this (I think it was, but don't have a record, as wasn't present for it). Perhaps Ian can confirm.

While these rope adjustments have helped, more could be done. Some of the tails seem to be quite long on the 4 and 5 in particular and a passing point on the tail of the 3 is awkwardly positioned for many ringers (might not be comfortable for quarter peals). The adjustment of the tails should be quite quick if people would like to see this done.

An inventory of the spare/old ropes in the tower was made (recorded in the Tower Log Book). Each rope was measured in various parts and its condition noted. Each rope now also bears a paper label with this information. In addition to the refurbished above, we have 6 ropes in a range of conditions. I don't believe we have any new ropes remaining, but some of the ropes could be revitalized by Phil (if he has capacity).

It is still uncertain why the 5 may be harder to pull off now than it used to be.

As an aside to all this, it may be necessary at some stage to clean the tower room (where ropes and things are stored). When I last observed, there were a few dead flies on the floor ☺